

In reply refer to
NSC

October 18, 1955

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762A.5/10-1855

Dear Mr. Gray:

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On January 26 of this year I sent a letter to Mr. Henzel in reply to one from him, about the implementation of certain aspects of NSC 5410/1 ("U.S. Policy on Berlin"). You will recall that we are required by the terms of NSC 5410/1 to seek to persuade the British and French to accept the entire policy expressed in that paper. At the time of my letter it did not seem wise to do this until after the Paris Agreements had been ratified. Accordingly, I wrote to Mr. Henzel that no approach to our Allies regarding major changes in the military strengths would be appropriate until all of our policy on Berlin had been explained to our Allies, and that tripartite technical planning on possible use of force to break a blockade would not be appropriate until such time as the principle had been accepted by the British and French. (The First of these points arises under sub-paragraphs 2(a) and 2(i) of the NSC paper, and the second under sub-paragraphs 3(f) and 3(l).)

After the Paris Agreements came into effect, a preliminary approach was made to the British and French in Washington with a view to further discussions in form of the full policy stated in NSC 5410/1. Because of the approaching Geneva Conference, these discussions were not pursued. It now seems to us an appropriate time to raise this subject again, and indeed to examine all aspects of our Berlin policy, particularly in view of the new situation created by the recent agreement between the Germans and the East Germans.

We have sent instructions to this effect to the Embassy in Bonn, asking that the policy expressed in the NSC paper be put to the British and French, that the Berlin situation be reviewed in the light

The Honorable
Gordon Gray,
Assistant Secretary of Defense
for International Security Affairs,
The Pentagon.

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the light of the Soviet-GDR agreement, and that a study be made of measures to be taken in the event of further interference with Allied access to Berlin. (Department's telegram No. 896 to Bonn, September 28.) This would, of course, be done in association with the military authorities, and I would not want anything said in my earlier letter to stand in the way of their full participation. I am aware that they have been authorized to take part in the conversations (DA 990032, October 9), but I thought I would make clear directly to you that the inhibitions suggested in my letter to Mr. Hensel no longer apply, so that there would be no misunderstanding on the point.

Sincerely yours,

Livingston T. Merchant
Assistant Secretary

~~for European Affairs~~

P. A. T.
PM

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GER - Mr. Reinstein

RA - Mr. Wolf